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### Citation for published version:

Cairns, D 2011, 'The Principle of Alternation and the Tyrant's Happiness in Bacchylidean Epinician', *Symbolae Osloenses*, vol. 85, pp. 17-32. <https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.1080/00397679.2011.631356>

### Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[dx.doi.org/10.1080/00397679.2011.631356](https://doi.org/10.1080/00397679.2011.631356)

### Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

### Document Version:

Early version, also known as pre-print

### Published In:

*Symbolae Osloenses*

### Publisher Rights Statement:

© Cairns, D. (2011). The Principle of Alternation and the Tyrant's Happiness in Bacchylidean Epinician. *Symbolae Osloenses*, 85, 17-32doi: [dx.doi.org/10.1080/00397679.2011.631356](https://doi.org/10.1080/00397679.2011.631356)

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### **The Principle of Alternation and the Tyrant's Happiness in Bacchylidean Epinician**

The principle of alternation is characteristic of the archaic world view; such happiness as humans can achieve has to be considered in its light. The *locus classicus* is the speech of Achilles to Priam in *Iliad* 24. 525ff.

ὥς γὰρ ἔπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι

525

ζῶειν ἀχνυμένοις· αὐτοὶ δέ τ' ἀκηδέες εἰσί.

δοιοὶ γὰρ τε πίθοι κατακείαται ἐν Διὸς οὔδει

δώρων οἷα δίδωσι κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἑάων·

ᾧ μὲν κ' ἀμμίξας δώῃ Ζεὺς τερπικέραυνος,

ἄλλοτε μὲν τε κακῶι ὃ γε κύρεται, ἄλλοτε δ' ἐσθλῶι·

530

ᾧ δέ κε τῶν λυγρῶν δώῃ, λωβητὸν ἔθηκε,

καὶ ἐκακὴ βούβρωστις ἐπὶ χθόνα δῖαν ἐλαύνει,

φοιτᾷ δ' οὔτε θεοῖσι τετιμένος οὔτε βροτοῖσιν.

ὥς μὲν καὶ Πηληϊῆ θεοὶ δόσαν ἀγλαὰ δῶρα [κτλ.]

For thus have the gods spun the thread for wretched mortals, that they should live in pain; but they themselves are without care. For there are two jars placed on the floor of Zeus of gifts that he gives, the one of ills, the other of blessings. If Zeus who delights in the thunderbolt gives a man a mixed lot, that man meets now with evil, now with good; but if he gives only from the evils, he ruins a man, and evil hunger drives him over the divine earth, and he wanders honoured by neither gods nor mortals. Just so the gods gave splendid gifts to Peleus.

Even the greatest achievers suffer, and a mixture of success and suffering is the best human beings can hope for, for no one gets unmixed good (though there are some who get unmixed evil). Extended good fortune can be ominous (as with Polycrates in Herodotus 3. 40-3), and a single day can bring ruin.<sup>i</sup> This is why one should count no man happy until he is dead, a notion prominent enough in Greek popular ethics to receive extended discussion in the first book of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (chapters 9-10).<sup>ii</sup> Extended misfortune, on the other hand, may be permanent: given all the evils that escaped from Pandora's jar, hope may be essential, but it is also regularly misplaced and sometimes even deluded.<sup>iii</sup>

Tragedy, and especially Sophoclean tragedy, is full of reflections on the principle of alternation, and numerous passages endorse the need for resignation, circumspection, and endurance in recognizing the instability of fortune and the mutability of human affairs.<sup>iv</sup> But in epinician the notion of vicissitude regularly constitutes the darkness

against which the light of human achievement can shine.<sup>v</sup> Though there are many instances, the classic example is Pindar's eighth *Pythian* (95-7), an ode for a Aeginetan wrestler:

ἐπά μεροι· τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὔ τις; σκιᾶς ὄναρ  
ἄνθρωπος. ἀλλ' ὅταν αἶγλα διόσδοτος ἔλθῃ,  
λαμπρὸν φέγγος ἔπεστιν ἀνδρῶν καὶ μείλιχος αἰών.95

Creatures of a day. What is a man? What is he not? Man is the dream of a shadow. But when Zeus-given splendour comes, a bright light is on men, and their life is sweet.

The notion here (and typically elsewhere) is not that there is a final state of bliss that a human being can attain, that the final change will be a positive one; but that, given the vicissitudes and uncertainties of life, the conversion of the transient bliss of the victory into the undying fame imparted by poetic celebration is the highest form of felicity that mortal beings can achieve.<sup>vi</sup> In such passages, the principle of alternation retains its pessimistic orientation, but emphasizes by contrast the value of whatever happiness we humans can achieve. In both the characteristically 'tragic' and the characteristically epinician applications of the theme of alternation, the type of 'happiness' envisaged certainly has a subjective element, as a state of bliss or contentment, but that aspect emerges especially by contrast with the state of sorrow that is its natural corollary, given the instability of human affairs, and so this is a concept of happiness that is dependent not only on one's own moods, attitudes, or even on one's own efforts, but also on what one actually achieves or fails to achieve, on the vagaries of fortune, on the lot of one's *philoi*, on the actions of others (including the gods), and (finally) on the perception and evaluation of all these things in the eyes of others. It is not a mental property alone, but a property of (if one is lucky) a whole life, all things considered, or of periods within a whole life, and the notion of 'life' that is operative in this regard includes much that goes beyond the individual and the outcomes that it is in his or her power to achieve. In epic and tragedy the principle of alternation emphasizes the social and reflexive aspects of happiness in so far as it underpins spectators' calibration of the vicissitudes of their own lives against the much greater doings and sufferings of the genres' heroic protagonists. In epinician, on the other hand, the principle helps structure the audience's reception of the victor's achievements, and thus illustrates the partial dependence of all happiness on others' validation, emphasizing the need to share and contextualize that happiness, especially in the light of the constraints against which happiness contends.

The principle of alternation is also the general background to achievement in Bacchylides. But, at least in odes for non-tyrants, Bacchylides is sparing in his use of vicissitude foil, and these odes are (perhaps remarkably) up-beat. In these odes, the use of vicissitude foil in the fragmentary Ode 14 (for Cleoptolemus of Thessaly; only the beginning of the poem, lines 1-23, survives) recalls Achilles in *Iliad* 24 most directly: some people enjoy a good *moira*, but there is nothing even a good man can do if disaster afflicts him; yet there are many varieties of mortal achievement, and each of them manifests divine favour (18). The long Ode 1 is fragmentary, but it is clear from what survives that its tone was positive: following the myth which places the current victor in a direct line from the Ceans' heroic forefathers, the poem concludes (159-84) with positive reflections on the immortality of excellence – wealth

is no reflection of a man's quality, but achievement, when it is a product both of hard work and the pious cultivation of the divine, affords positive hope for the future and permits joy (*terpsis*, 169) in life, as long as illness and poverty are absent. After death, it leaves behind a much-admired *agalma* of *eukleia* (183-4). Ode 9 (for Automedes of Phlius) has the negative myth of the Seven against Thebes (illustrating the *gnōmē* that hope takes men's thought away, 18), but this contrasts with the positive exemplar of Heracles' victory over the Nemean lion (7-9). The ode's main myth (40-65) is a catalogue of the daughters of Asopus, illustrious city-nymphs whose paternity brings glory to Phlius; it ends with the idea of fame as compensation for death and a sign of divine favour in an uncertain world (79ff.). Ode 10, for an Athenian victor, has a reference to the uncertainty of the future (45-7), but is otherwise a positive catalogue of achievement that describes itself as an immortal *agalma* of the Muses, a common joy for mankind (11-13). In Ode 11, the victor (Alexidamus of Metapontum) is himself an exemplar of positive alternation: he was previously unfairly deprived of an Olympic crown, but has now, thanks to Artemis, been compensated with a Pythian victory (24-39). This rhythm, in which negative gives way to positive, is then repeated in the myth, in which the strife of Proetus and Acrisius has a positive outcome in the settlement of Tiryns, while the madness of Proetus' daughters is healed by the intercession of Artemis. The despair of Proetus is dispelled as his prayer to the goddess is answered and his daughters atone for their impiety towards Hera by founding a cult in honour of Artemis. In its conclusion, the ode presents the foundation of Metapontum, the establishment of its cult of Artemis, and (by implication) the victory of Alexidamus as elements in an infinite catalogue of Achaean achievement (113-26).<sup>vii</sup> In the long Ode 13, only a few men are said to be granted the success whose immortal *kleos* can survive the dark cloud of death (58-66), but the victor, Pytheas, is one of them (67-76). In this, he resembles the Aeacid heroes of his Aeginetan homeland, whose contribution to the defeat of Troy put an end to the false hopes aroused in the Trojans by Achilles' temporary withdrawal from battle. As in Ode 9, so in Ode 13, human inability to foresee vicissitude is displaced onto a negative element of the myth and provided with a positive counterweight – Aeacid vicissitudes (of which there were many) are ignored and their success (in this Ode) is unblemished. Just so the truth of genuine achievement overcomes envy for Pytheas and his trainer (199-210), and both the victor and the poet can trust in positive hopes for future prosperity (220-1), as the survival of the poet's song ensures that of the victor's fame (221-31).

In these odes, there is recognition of mortality, human fallibility, and the fragility of happiness, but any vicissitudes faced by the honorands are overcome, and any negative implications of the poems' myths are outweighed by positive aspects. I shall not argue that Bacchylides' major odes (3 and 5) for the tyrant, Hieron of Syracuse, are wholly different from this. But I do want to argue for a somewhat different use of the motif of alternation, in such a way that both the negative and the positive aspects are deepened. The two great odes for Hieron are darker in their use of vicissitude foil, yet hold out stronger hopes of overcoming vicissitude than the odes for non-tyrant victors. They deploy the principle of alternation in a way that resembles the tragic vision of the fragility of happiness, but combine this with a contrasting prospect of felicity that exceeds the epinician norm.

There are several general differences between Bacchylides' two major compositions for Hieron and the longer myth-odes composed for non-tyrant victors.<sup>viii</sup> In contrast to

Odes 1, 9, 11, and 13, in Odes 3 and 5 the central myths have no specific association with the traditions of the victor's home city. In the same way, 3 and 5 make very little of the city's institutions, and in general the tyrant's relation to the Syracusans is presented solely as that of ruler, military commander, and source of largesse. In the non-tyrant odes, by contrast, there is a strong sense that the victor's success is shared by his fellow citizens and representative of the city.<sup>ix</sup> Though all epinicia celebrate individual achievement and promise, above all, undying fame for the victor, these two odes for Hieron are even more focused on the victor as a pre-eminent individual.

The beginning of Ode 5 (476 BC) is unique in the epinician corpus: the first 8 lines constitute a full-scale hymnic invocation, not of a god, not of a personification, but of the honorand himself.<sup>x</sup> The poem's opening section is then extended far beyond the norm, first by the simile of the eagle's majestic progress (a symbol of the abundance of material that the pre-eminent Hieron offers the virtuoso Bacchylides, 16-30), and then by a detailed description of the victory of the horse Pherenicus at Olympia (31-49). But then the tone changes, as the *makarismos* that ends the ode's first section emphasizes that no mortal is fortunate in all respects (50-5, esp. 53-5). The opening invocation, with its claim that Hieron is *eumoiros* (1), is now apparently qualified. The myth then illustrates the *gnōmē* that precedes it: Meleager died in his prime, at the height of martial success, killed not by a worthy opponent but by his own mother, because, in the blindness of battle, he slew his mother's brothers (127-54). The tears with which Meleager introduced his own narrative (93-4) are then answered by those of Heracles (155-8), as he concludes that the best thing for mortals is not to be born (160-2), before taking the fateful step of requesting the hand in marriage of

Meleager's sister, the ominously named Deianira (Δαΐά νειρα), presently, but not for ever, ignorant of Aphrodite, the enchanter of mortals (165-9, 172-5). Heracles (like Oeneus when he angered Artemis, 96-102, and like Meleager when he killed his uncles, 129-35) takes a step in ignorance of its consequences and initiates a chain of events that will culminate in the ironic fulfilment of his original assumption that the manner of Meleager's death will have something to tell him about his own (89-92). Like Meleager, he too will be killed by a close female relative, under the influence of a goddess, and with the aid of magic (the link underlined by Althaea's epithet δαΐφρων, 'fiery-minded', in 137; cf. Δαΐά νειρα in 173); and so the unspoken conclusion to the myth answers, ironically once more, its beginning, when Heracles was introduced as 'unconquered' (ἀνίκητος, 57). Even the greatest heroes, paradigms of success, are subdued, suffer misfortune, and die; their qualities are not necessarily sufficient to guarantee their happiness; and their mortality entails a basic fragility before forces that they cannot comprehend.

As if to drive home the myth's apparently pessimistic message, it is followed by a hymnic invocation of a much more regular epinician type than the one that began the ode. Now the Muse is commanded to sing of Zeus, Alpheus, Pelops, and Pisa (178-82). The exaltation of Hieron seems to have been replaced by a proper emphasis on the role of divine favour in all human success. Accordingly, Hesiod is then invoked in support of the proposition that human beings who enjoy such favour should also be rewarded with a good reputation among their fellows (191-4) and the ode ends with a prayer to Zeus to preserve Hieron's happiness 'unshaken (ἀκινήτους) in peace' (200).

The ode, and especially its myth, deal with the phenomenon of alternation in a manner and at a level of seriousness that can be compared with any of the best-known statements of the theme. There are numerous specific debts to a variety of epic models, both extant (the Meleager paradigm in *Iliad* 9, the Nekyia of *Odyssey* 11, the encounter of Odysseus and Nausicaa in *Odyssey* 6) and non-extant (the putative lost epic on the *katabasis* of Heracles).<sup>xi</sup> But one very clear influence is the passage with which we began. Like Achilles in *Iliad* 24, Heracles is moved to sympathy, because he recognizes his own condition in the plight of another (155-8; cf. *Il.* 24. 486-512):

φασὶν ἄδεισιβόαν

Ἀμφιτρύωνος παῖδα μοῦνον δὴ τότε

τέγξαι βλέφαρον, ταλαπενθέος

πότμον οἰκτίροντα φωτός.

They say that the son of Amphitryon, undaunted by the war-cry, then and then alone wetted his eyes, pitying the destiny of a man enduring suffering. He then draws the conclusion in a *gnōmē* (that it is best not to be born, 160-2), just as Achilles (in the passage quoted at the head of this paper) draws pessimistic conclusions from his recognition of the humanity which unites his and his father's fate with the situation of Priam and Hector. Thereupon, however, also like Achilles, Heracles sets a limit to lamentation (162-4).<sup>xii</sup>

ἀλλ' οὐ γάρ τις ἔστιν

πρᾶξις τάδε μυρομένοις,

χρὴ κείνο λέγειν ὅτι καὶ μέλλει τελεῖν.

But since there is no purpose in bemoaning these things, a man must speak of what he intends to accomplish.

Yet his response is not one of passive acceptance; it is not grief (a *pathos*) that is required, but action (*praxis*, 163).<sup>xiii</sup> This all sounds consolatory, and seems to imply that human existence is as bleak as Heracles says it is; the leaf of prosperity that Hieron has received from Pherenicus (185-6), the roots of good things whose survival depends on Zeus (197-200), would then be as much as any mortal can achieve.<sup>xiv</sup>

The concentration on such weighty aspects of the archaic world-view in Ode 5 no doubt reflects not only the honorand's character and situation but also the extent to which Hieron wished his commissions to reflect the deepest ethical concerns of traditional poetic idiom (he is praised for his literary taste in lines 3-6). But there may be more, and more that is personal to Hieron, than this. The abrupt conclusion to the myth, with its ostentatious break-off formula, forces Hieron and the audience to think of Heracles' future, and especially of his death at the hands of Deianira. The presence of Meleager in Hades reminds us that, for most, the afterlife is a grim and shadowy existence. But death was not like that for Heracles: his ascent to Olympus finds its way, albeit as a kind of afterthought, into the *Odyssey* (11. 601-4) and the *Theogony* (950-5) and is mentioned in the context of the Deianira story in the Hesiodic *Catalogue* (fr. 25. 26-33 M-W); though it may be 'interpolated' in the *Odyssey* and *Theogony*, it is well established by the date of this ode. Heracles is also the

paradigmatic initiate of the mysteries at Eleusis;<sup>xv</sup> this poem narrates the episode in his career that requires and illustrates that status; and Hieron was priest of Demeter and Persephone at Syracuse.<sup>xvi</sup> The poem's vegetation imagery, and especially its reference to the leaf of Hieron's *eudaimonia* (186), then remind us of the appearance of similar imagery in Orphic-mystic eschatology, especially in the form of the gold leaves which initiates took to their graves as tokens of their hopes for blessedness beyond the growth and decay of mortal existence.<sup>xvii</sup> The focus of the poem, and especially of its myth, on the possibility of *eudaimonia* in the face of human mortality may appeal to the *laudandus*' particular hopes for the afterlife, despite apparent stress on the ephemerality of mortal existence.

But whether or not that is the case, there is a further possible implication of the way that the myth's abrupt end forces the audience to reflect on Heracles' future. Heracles' marriage to Deianira did bring about his death, but it was not a childless marriage: their son Hyllus was the progenitor of the Heraclidae whose return to the Peloponnese gave its Dorian states a central element of their foundational mythology.<sup>xviii</sup> From the return of the Heraclidae was also derived the tribal division of Dorian states; Hyllus was eponym of one of the three tribes. From *Pythian* 1. 60-5 it is clear not only that Hieron wanted people to believe that he had followed this tribal division in his foundation of Aetna, but also that his ambitions in doing so were to found a dynasty that could trace its origins to the Heraclidae – Hieron founded Aetna 'under the laws of Hyllus' rule' for his son Deinomenes, 'Aetna's king':

ἄγ' ἔπειτ' Αἴτνας βασιλεῖ φίλιον ἐξεύρωμεν ὕμνον· 60  
 τῷ πόλιν κείναν θεοδμάτῳ σὺν ἐλευθερίᾳ  
 Ὑλλίδος στάθμας ἱέρων ἐν νόμοις ἔκ-  
 τισσε· θέλοντι δὲ Παμφύλου  
 καὶ μὰ ν' Ἡρακλειδᾶν ἔκγονοι  
 ὄχθαις ὑπο Ταῦγέτου ναῖοντες αἰ-  
 εὶ μένειν τεθμοῖσιν ἐν Αἰγίμιου  
 Δωριεῖς.

65

Come, let us devise a friendly song for Aetna's king, for whom Hieron founded that city with god-built freedom, under the laws of Hyllus' rule. The descendants of Pamphylus, aye, and of the Heraclidae too, who dwell beneath the cliffs of Taÿgetus, are willing to abide forever under the ordinances of Aegimius as Dorians.

If this formed any part of the reflections that Bacchylides' narrative prompted in Hieron or his audience, then the dynastic links between Heracles and his descendants (on the one hand) and Hieron and his (on the other) may have served as another form of positive consolation and hope for the future.

In these two ways, then, the process of alternation from which Heracles draws such pessimistic conclusions and whose negative implications for himself he fails to foresee continues beyond the event that is most prominently foreshadowed at the end of the myth and brings positive changes to counteract the apparent pessimism of the myth's unspoken conclusion: Heracles died as a man, but became a god, and his son

by Deianira was head of an illustrious dynasty of rulers. These hopes, for life after death and for dynastic succession, come together in Hieron's foundation of Aetna, which Diodorus (11. 49. 1-2) dates to 476/5 BC. Given that the elaborate Syracusan celebration presupposed by Bacchylides 5 must have followed quite some time after Hieron's Olympic victory in the summer of 476, it is very likely indeed that Hieron's plans were already formed when Bacchylides' poem was performed. Hieron would have known well that city-founders received cult honours after death; according to Diodorus, this was one of his motives in founding Aetna, and indeed, again according to Diodorus, his wishes were granted.<sup>xix</sup> Hieron thus had a special interest in the Eleusinian mysteries, whose paradigmatic initiate was Heracles, in the Heraclid origins of Dorian states, and in the cult of ktistic heroes.

Hence we might re-read the *makarismos* and *gnōmē* of 50-5:

ὄλβιος ὣτινι θεός  
μοῖράν τε καλῶν ἔπορεν  
σύν τ' ἐπιζήλωι τύχαι  
ἀφνεδὸν βιοτὰν διὰ γειν· οὐ  
γάρ τις ἰ ἐπιχθονίων  
πλάντ' ἀγαθ' εὐδαίμων ἔφϋ.

Blessed is he to whom the god gives a fated share of good things and, together with enviable success, a wealthy life to live. For no mortal on earth was ever blessed in everything.

We have taken this at face value as a qualification of the quasi-cultic hymn to Hieron with which the poem began and as an introduction to a myth which illustrates the suffering of even the greatest heroes. *Makarismos* regularly has this function of limiting or contextualizing human success;<sup>xx</sup> but it is also used to emphasize that form of human happiness that approximates most closely to the divine. In particular, it is a regular way of referring to the benefits of mystic initiation.<sup>xxi</sup> Having heard the whole myth, an alert audience member – especially one such as Hieron, with the ability to understand the poet's meaning aright (3-6) – may have reflected upon the similarity between this passage and *h. Cer.* 480-2 and 486-9:

ὄλβιος ὃς τά δ' ὅπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων·  
ὃς δ' ἀτελὴς ἱερῶν, ὃς τ' ἄμμορος, οὐ ποθ' ὁμοίων  
αἴσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι.

Happy among men on earth is he who has seen these things; but he who is uninitiated in the rites and has no share in them never has a portion of such things once he is dead, down in the dank darkness.

μέγ' ὄλβιος ὃν τιν' ἐκεῖναι  
προφρονέως φίλωνται ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων  
αἶψα δέ οἱ πέμπουσιν ἐφέστιον ἐς μέγα δῶμα



Πλοῦτον, ὃς ἀνθρώποις ἄφενος θνητοῖσι δίδωσιν.

Greatly blessed among men on earth is he whom they earnestly love: they soon send Plutus as guest to his great house, Plutus who gives wealth to men.<sup>xxii</sup>

There are other possible mystic allusions in Bacchylides 5, but this is the best candidate. Its possible mystic associations are not essential or immediately obvious; they have to be supplied on the basis of additional knowledge – such as Hieron clearly had and is praised for possessing.

Ode 3 (468 BC) celebrates Hieron's greatest victory, in the four-horse chariot race at Olympia; but at the time of that victory Hieron was already serious ill (and had been since at least 470, as one may deduce from *P.* 1. 46-57). The argument of the ode appears quite simple: Hieron has won the greatest of all equestrian victories, testimony, certainly, to his wealth, but also (as indeed is the wealth in its own right) to divine favour. This divine favour is directly associated with that received by the Lydian king Croesus, Delphic Apollo's greatest benefactor of all (61-2), as Hieron is his greatest Greek benefactor (63-6). The point of comparison with Croesus is clear, and it is meant to be positive; it appears to be one that had already pleased Hieron when used by Pindar in *Pythian* 1.<sup>xxiii</sup> Croesus' benefactions led to his rescue from the pyre; but while (according to Apollo's advice to Admetus, 78-84) Hieron's dedications offer him grounds for hope in a world of uncertainty, the most he can hope for, it seems, is a long and prosperous life (81-2) and fame after death, the light of his achievement nurtured by Bacchylides' Muse long after his mortal body has decayed (90-2). He is like Croesus in that he is a great benefactor of the gods, and this deserves praise (67-71); he is a ruler, favoured by the Muses, but he also is a mortal, ephemeral, one of those who must guard against the winged hopes that undo their minds (72-6: the *gnōmai* follow almost immediately upon the comparison of Hieron with Croesus in which Hieron was addressed in the second person, 64).

Each of the poem's two mythological elements underlines the principle of alternation. Croesus is a paradigm of vicissitude: in Herodotus, his downfall illustrates Solon's maxim that one should 'count no man happy until he is dead'; unlike Homer's Achilles, Herodotus' Croesus fails to appreciate that alternation defines the gulf between human and divine happiness; and so he invites great *nemesis* from the god, because he thought himself (*not*, be it noted, because he was) the happiest of men (Hdt. 1. 32. 7, 1. 34. 1).<sup>xxiv</sup> In Bacchylides, Croesus is defeated and ready for death, standing on top of a 'wooden house' (49) constructed before the 'bronze-walled' courtyard (32) while his womenfolk are dragged from the 'well-built' palace (46) and the river Pactolus, normally rich in gold, now runs red with blood. Croesus is undeniably a symbol of the vulnerability of despotic power.<sup>xxv</sup> His example shows that wealth, in the material sense, can come to nothing. Similarly, Admetus is introduced solely in order to receive Apollo's advice that all men are mortal, that the future is uncertain, and that each day could be one's last (78-84).

Yet, if we know anything about Admetus, it is that Apollo, in gratitude, delivered him from death. In this ode, the same is true of Croesus, as the alternation that his downfall illustrates goes one step further and he is transported, as a reward for his benefactions at Delphi, to the land of the Hyperboreans, a fabulous people, favourites

of Apollo, whose world of festivity and felicity is described in Pindar's earliest ode (*P.* 10. 29-44, 498 BC). Both Admetus and Croesus are used in this ode to exemplify the lability of the mortal condition; yet both receive more than mortal recompense for their cultivation of the divine.

Croesus' piety is the grounds for his translation (61) and the point of comparison between him and Hieron (61-6). In the next section (61-84), in which the theme of alternation in Apollo's advice to Admetus (78-82) expands and illustrates the narrator's pessimistic *gnōmai* of 73-6, piety is presented as the proper response to alternation: 'Cheer your heart by doing holy things. For that is the highest gain' (83-4). Real prosperity is not material, but spiritual, as wealth dedicated to the gods stores up *charis* in return. Ultimately, death is the circumstance that one's 'good cheer' must confront (74, 79-80). As it is explicit (63-6, cf. 92-4) that Hieron has already amply followed Apollo's advice to Admetus, so it is implicit that he too may be confident in the face of death. To this Hieron's (in fact) fatal illness cannot be irrelevant; but what precisely is Hieron's confidence to focus on? Is it just the better of the two options presented to Admetus (long rather than short life)? Is it the survival of his *aretē* after death? Or is it something more? Is Croesus simply a mythologized figure whose miraculous translation symbolizes the happiness that Hieron currently enjoys on account of his victory and will continue to enjoy on account of Bacchylides' praise; or do we see him as a historical figure whose concrete and tangible benefactions brought the kind of reward that is in principle open to Hieron?

In the lines following the explicit comparison of Hieron and Croesus (67-98) all the stress is on the more pessimistic of the two interpretations: it is poetic celebration of piety and virtue that is presented as compensation for the inevitability of ageing and death (74, 76, 78, 88-90); hopes that are not soundly based in acceptance of the transience of human life are said to be illusory (75-6). On the surface, the priamel of 85-92 belongs with this interpretation:

φρονέοντι συνετὰ γάρυω· βαθὺς μὲν  
αἰθήρ ἀμίαντος· ὕδωρ δὲ πόντου  
οὐ σάπεται· εὐφροσύνα δ' ὁ χρυσός·  
ἀνδρὶ δ' οὐ θέμις, πολλὸν π[αρ]έντα

85

γῆρας, θ[ε]λ[ε]ια]ν ἀπ[ο]τις π[ε]γκομ[ε]σ[σ]αι  
ἥβαν· ἀρετᾶ[ς γε μ]ὲν οὐ μινύθει  
βροτῶν ἅμα σ[ώμ]ατι φέγγος, ἀλλὰ  
Μοῦσά νιν τρ[έφει.]

90

I say things understandable to him that can think. The deep sky is undefiled. The water of the sea does not rot. Gold is festive cheer. But for a mortal man it is not ordained that he should throw aside grey old age

and bring back again flourishing youth. Yet the light of mortals' *aretē* does not dwindle along with their bodies. The Muse nurtures it.

Dense and difficult though it is (and intended to be: φρονέοντι συνετὰ γάρῳ) the priamel clearly moves from the permanence of air and water to the impermanence of human life, before concluding that there is, indeed, something immortal in human beings, the light of excellence that the Muse nurtures. The statement that ‘gold is festive cheer’ (εὐφροσύνα δ’ ὁ χρυσός) is the crucial element that pivots between the ‘foil’ element of the priamel (air and water as permanent elements) and its conclusion (88-92), which consists of observations on the human condition. Gold is both an everlasting element alongside the sky and the sea and a means to ends that are defined by human mortality. It is gold that allows one to cheer one’s heart by doing holy things (εὐφραίνει, 83); this is why gold is *euphrosynē*. The argument of the priamel as a whole is at first antithetical (the sky, the sea, and gold are everlasting, while humans grow old and die), but ultimately analogical: like the sky, the sea, and gold, there is something in human virtue that lasts forever.

But that something is explicitly poetic fame, nurtured by the Muse (92) and sustained by the survival of this very poem (96-8). The only possible warrant for reading any more into the passage and its wider context is the language of 85-7 (‘I say things understandable to him that can think . . .’). These lines suggest that there is more to be extracted from Bacchylides’ words than appears on the surface, and they follow immediately upon the *gnōmē* ‘Cheer your heart by doing holy things. For that is the greatest gain’ (83-4).<sup>xxvi</sup> This is (most likely) Apollo’s advice; its recipient, Admetus, like Croesus, received extraordinary *charis* from the god.<sup>xxvii</sup> The notion that the proper use of wealth in offerings to the gods allows one to face death with confidence is put forward by Cephalus in the first book of Plato’s *Republic* (330d-331c). The traditional status of this idea is established by Cephalus’ quotation of Pindar fr. 214 S-M in its support:

γλυκεῖά οἱ καρδίαν  
 ἀτάλλοισα γηροτρόφος συναορεῖ  
 Ἐπίς, ἃ μάλιστα θνατῶν πολύστροφον γνῶ-  
 μαν κυβερνᾷ.

With him lives sweet Hope, nursing him in old age and soothing his heart, she who most of all steers mortals’ much-veering judgement.

In 468 BC, when he won the victory which Bacchylides 3 celebrates, Hieron was well established as the founder of a new city; his death, and thus his elevation to the status of ktistic hero, was only months away. And his association with the cult of Demeter and Persephone is given pride of place in the very first words of the poem (1-3).

The primary reference of line 85’s statement φρονέοντι συνετὰ γάρῳ (‘I say things understandable to him that can think’) is the enigmatic quality of the priamel that follows. But since on any account the priamel focuses on issues of life and death, the explicit advertisement of allusiveness and possible deeper meanings may recall the mystery religions. The best (non-circular) evidence for this is the Orphic fragments 1 a and b Bernabé (334, 245. 1-2 Kern):<sup>xxviii</sup>

ἀείσω ξυνετοῖσι· θύρας δ’ ἐπίθεσθε βέβηλοι.

I sing to those who understand; close your doors, ye uninitiated.

φθέγξομαι οἷς θέμις ἐστί· θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε βέβηλοι  
πάντες ὁμῶς.

I speak to those whom it is right to address; all ye uninitiated, close your doors.

The parallel with the use of the same conceit in lines 83-6 of Pindar's *Olympian* 2 (a poem infused with mystic eschatology) is also suggestive.<sup>xxix</sup>

Like Ode 5, but even more so, Ode 3 advertises its own allusive and enigmatic qualities. Both odes emphasize their special appeal to an honorand who is credited with the intelligence and discernment to understand what other hearers may not. The life of that honorand offers plenty of opportunity for reflection upon the vicissitudes that are common to all humans, great and not great, but also much evidence for belief in the possibility of a blessed afterlife. The arguments in favour of allusion to such beliefs stop short of proof; but this is exactly as one would expect. These are not the kind of sentiments one can come right out with; to do so would undermine the piety on which Hieron's hopes rest. The two odes explore and exploit the archaic world view in all its profundity, portraying Hieron both as a man of deep sensibility and as a connoisseur of the poetry that sustains and reflects that sensibility. They present him as a man who knows where he stands in relation both to other mortals and to the gods, as someone who, on Horace's principle *dis te minorem quod geris imperas* (*Odes* 3. 6. 5), is fitted to rule others by virtue of his piety, justice, and sense of human limitations. But they also present Hieron with analogues, in the form of Heracles, Croesus, and Admetus, for exceptional and greater possibilities, the possibility of overcoming vicissitude in a final and positive change of fortune, a possibility sustained by sufficient reminiscences of the language of mystery cult to allow us to make a link to Hieron's attested interest in his own post-mortem existence. The stress on human limitations is so pronounced because the hope that Hieron can transcend them is latent. In this regard, Hieron's hopes for hero-cult make a decisive difference: it is presumably no coincidence that, when Sophoclean tragedy holds out the prospect of a positive end to the vicissitudes of alternation, it is also (in *Aj.*, *Tr.*, *OC*) in connexion with hero-cult that it does so.<sup>xxx</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> I.e. man is *ephēmeros*: see Fränkel (1946), Dickie (1976), and Theunissen (2002) 45-53.

<sup>ii</sup> See A. *Ag.* 928-9; E. *Alc.* 782-802, *Hclld.* 865-6, *Tro.* 509-10; Hdt. 1. 32. 7; cf. Arist. *EN* 1. 9-10, 1100a4-1101b9.

<sup>iii</sup> See Hes. *Op.* 498-501, Sem. fr. 1. 6-10 West, Thgn. 637-8, Sol. fr. 13. 33-6 West, Pi. *O.* 12. 5-6, *P.* 3. 21-3, *N.* 8. 45, 11. 45-6, *I.* 2. 43, S. *Ant.* 614-16, E. *Supp.* 479-80, Antiph. B 58 DK, Thuc. 5. 103; in Bacchylides, cf. 9. 18 and 35-6, 13.157-8 (combined with notion of man's ephemerality); but contrast the positive hopes of 1. 163-5, 13. 220-1 (and cf. 3. 83); a positive form of hope is also implied by prayers for continued good fortune, such as 5. 36, 199-200.

<sup>iv</sup> See A. *Ag.* 1327-9; S. *Aj.* 118-33, 485-90, 646-92 (with Cairns (2006)), *Ant.* 1155-67 (with Sim. 521 *PMG*), *Tr.* 1-3, 29-30, 126-31, 129-31, 296-302, 943-6, *OT* 1186-1221, [1529], *OC* 394, 607-20, fr. 871 R; E. *Med.* 1224-30, *Hipp.* 1105-10, *Supp.* 331, *Oedipus* fr. 549, 554 Kannicht; cf. Hdt. 1. 5. 4, 1. 207. 1, 7. 50. 2.

<sup>v</sup> See further the article by Anastasia Marivela in this fascicule.

<sup>vi</sup> See Bundy (1986) 47-53, 74-5.

<sup>vii</sup> Cf. Cairns (2005), (2010) 107-28, 268-99 *passim*.

<sup>viii</sup> For the purposes of this paper I leave the short Ode 4, also for Hieron, out of account.

<sup>ix</sup> Cf. Cairns (2010) 21-9.

<sup>x</sup> See Race (1990) 184, Stenger (2004) 122, 124, Cairns (2010) 216.

<sup>xi</sup> On the latter, see Norden (1957) 5, 163, 206, 223-4, 237-8, 258, 275, 300, 465-6; on the lost poem's Eleusinian-Orphic nature and its existence already in the sixth century, see Graf (1974) 142-50 (esp. 149).

<sup>xii</sup> Cf. *Il.* 24. 524, (οὐ γάρ τις πρήξις πέλεται κρυεροῖο γόοιο, 'For there is no purpose in icy lamentation'), 549-50 (ἄνσχεο, μὴ δ' ἀλίσστον ὁδύρεο σὸν κατὰ θυμόν· | οὐ γάρ τι πρήξεις ἀκαχήμενος υἱὸς ἔῃος . . ., 'Bear up, and do not grieve without cessation in your heart. You will achieve nothing by grieving for your son . . .').

<sup>xiii</sup> Cf. also Heracles' *thambos* at Meleager (Θάμβησεν, 5. 84) with Achilles'

towards Priam (Θάμβησεν, *Il.* 24. 483) ; cf. also their mutual admiration

(θαυμάζειν) at 629-31. Note also the similarity between 5. 154, ἀγλαὰ ν ἦβαν προλείπων ('leaving behind my glorious youth') and λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἦβην ('leaving behind youth and manhood') at *Il.* 16. 857 (death of Patroclus) = 22. 363 (death of Hector), i.e. the two events which prompt the grief of Achilles and Priam (resp.) in *Il.* 24.

<sup>xiv</sup> Brannan (1972) 262-3 and Lefkowitz (1976) 72 go further, arguing that the use of vegetation imagery of Hieron's success here echoes its earlier use of the ψυχαί (65), of Meleager (87, 141-2, 168), and of Deianira (172), suggesting that all that blooms must similarly fade and die.

<sup>xv</sup> See Pi. fr. dub. 346 S-M, E. *Her.* 613, Xen. *Hell.* 6. 3. 6, [Pl.] *Axioch.* 371e, D. S. 4. 14. 3, 4. 25. 1, 4. 26. 1, Plut. *Thes.* 30. 5, Apollod. 2. 5. 12, schol. Ar. *Ran.* 501, *Plut.* 845, 1013; cf. Graf (1974) 69, 143-4; Lloyd-Jones (1990); Boardman (1975) and in

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*LIMC* iv. 1 (1988), 805-6; Parker (1996) 98-100; on the iconography, cf. Clinton (1992) 16, 81.

<sup>xvi</sup> For the Deinomenids' hereditary priesthood of Demeter and Persephone, see Hdt. 7. 153. 2, with Zuntz (1971) 135-9; cf. Hieron's own dedication of a temple to the two goddesses after his victory at Himera in 480, D. S. 11. 26. 7; Pi. *O.* 6. 94-6.

<sup>xvii</sup> On the gold leaves see Zuntz (1971) 277-86, Cole (2003), Edmonds (2004) 29-110, Bernabé (2005), Graf and Johnston (2007), and Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008); for the possibility of allusion in B. 5. 186, cf. Garner (1992) 65 n. 62.

<sup>xviii</sup> See D. S. 4. 57-8, Apollod. 2. 8. 2-5.

<sup>xix</sup> See D. S. 11. 49. 2, 11. 66. 4.

<sup>xx</sup> Hes. *Op.* 826-8, Alcman. 1. 37-9; Thgn. 1012-15, 1172-3.

<sup>xxi</sup> *h. Cer.* 480-2, 486-9, Pi. fr. 137 S-M, S. fr. 837 R, E. *Ba.* 73-82, 902-11; cf. the gold leaf F 488. 9 Bernabé.

<sup>xxii</sup> Cf. also Hes. *Th.* 954-5 on the immortality of Heracles:

ὄλβιος, ὃς μέγα ἔργον ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἀνύσσας  
ναίει ἀπήμαντος καὶ ἀγήραος ἥματα πάντα.

Happy is he who completed his great work among the immortals and lives forever free from trouble and age.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Pi. *P.* 1. 94, οὐ φθίνει Κροίσου φιλόφρων ἀρετά ( 'the kindly excellence of Croesus does not perish' ).

<sup>xxiv</sup> For comparison of Hdt.'s and B.'s versions of the Croesus story, see Gentili (1958) 84-91, Segal (1971) = (1998) 281-93, Bright (1976) 176-88, Crane (1996), Howie (2005) 51-64, Cairns (2010) 65-7.

<sup>xxv</sup> For the view that Croesus in B. 3 is a symbol of the barbarian opponents that Hieron was proud to have vanquished (*P.* 1. 72-80), a warning of the excess that Hieron is to avoid, see Reichel (2000) 153-6.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Cf. B. 1. 163-5, ὁ δ' εὖ ἔρδων θεοὺς | ἐλπίδι κυδροτέρῃ | σαίνει κέαρ ('the man who treats the gods well soothes his heart with firmer hope').

<sup>xxvii</sup> For the issue of where Apollo's direct speech ends (in 82 or 84), see Stenger (2004) 89-90, 93, 95-6, Cairns (2010) 211.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Cf. *P. Derv.* col. 7. 9-10 = F 3 Bernabé; Emped. B 3. 4 DK; Pl. *Smp.* 218b; further parallels in Bernabé ad F 1a.

<sup>xxix</sup> See also Krummen (1990) 258; Currie (2005) 386-7, 389-90.

<sup>xxx</sup> For further thoughts on these lines, at least in connexion with *Aj.*, see Cairns (2006). The fundamental resource for intimations of hero-cult in epinician is, of course, Currie (2005).

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